

SAUL'S CONVERSION

Acts 9:1-9

God's work at salvation:

Draw, Illumination, Conviction, Soul-winner, Faith to believe, Indwelling, New nature, Seals, Family, Identity, Fruit, Eternal life

Saul: Zealous and religious, Loved God, Memorized Word, prayed, lived a separated life, Promoted the glory of God, So zealous for God that he gave his life to getting rid of Christians

Acts 9:1 Passion. Acts 8:3; Gal 1:13 Sincere!

He believed: Law of Moses obeyed before Messiah come; Sanctity of Temple; Traditions of OT and prophets obeyed to please God; Jesus an imposter; Believers preaching that Jesus alive and empowering them to do miracles; They are of Satan; They were destroying historic Jewish faith; Must be eliminated; His ministry of squelching Christian heretical movement was pleasing to God

A person can be:

Sincere, but sincerely wrong!

Intelligent and wrong.

Religious and wrong.

Wiersbe: ... he stumbled over the Cross... because he depended on his own righteousness and not on the righteousness of God Many self-righteous religious people today do not see their need for a Saviour and resent it if you tell them they are sinners.

Acts 9:1-2 High priest--head of Supreme Court, Sanhedrin. In charge of all religious affairs of nation. **Letters:** Accreditation. Verification. Validation. Authorization. ...to Damascus about 50 miles from sea; Large number of Jewish. 30-40 Jewish synagogues. Christians having impact...to the synagogues: Christians not broken with Jewish synagogues; Paul pictured himself as "The Great Rescuer." ***This way:*** This philosophy, doctrine, sect...unto Jerusalem Center of Judaism. Jewish Christians ---defectors from the faith.

Acts 9:3-4 ***As he journeyed:*** outside eastern gate...1 mile from Damascus at place for burying Christians ***and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:*** Like a flash of lightning.

Adam Clark: *been an extraordinary flash of the electric fluid, accompanied with thunder.*

And he fell to the earth:

Phillips: ... one moment Saul of Tarsus was riding high, secure in the impenetrable armor of his iron-clad prejudices, ... The next moment he was prostrate on the ground, blinded by such a light as never shone on earth and listening to such a voice as charmed the very angels of God. Acts 26:14; Dan 8:17; Dan 10:8

Saul, Saul: emphasis. Urgency. Rebuke. ***Why persecutest thou me?*** Saul persecuting Jesus, the head of the church.

Acts 9:5 Mac: *the light of truth was confirmed in his soul and the gospel became positive.*

Saul knew their arguments: Eyewitnesses! Hands touched Him. Blind see. Palsied man healed. **Pricks:** goad, sharp pointed stick or iron. Used to motivate oxen; Light turned on in Saul's mind and heart.

Face the facts: Had been wrong, Christians had been right, Jesus alive, Jesus the Messiah, He was lost and in danger of judgment of God, Needed to repent and place faith and trust in Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Phil 3:4-12

Wiersbe: *Saul was out to arrest others when the Lord arrested him. He had to lose his religion before he could gain the righteousness of Christ.*

What happened to him? Called by God's grace: Gal 1:15; It was sudden: 1 Cor 15:8; Apprehended: Phil 3:12; Light turned on: 2 Cor 4:6; Given mercy: 1 Tim 1:13; Saw the Lord: 1 Cor 9:1

Acts 9:6 Wiersbe: *Saul thought he had been serving God, when in reality he had been persecuting the Messiah! When measured by the holiness of Jesus Christ, Saul's good works and legalistic self-righteousness looked like filthy rags ... All of his values changed. He was a new person because he trusted Jesus Christ.*

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? One of evidences of new nature is desire to obey. To serve. ...**And the Lord said** General will first, Then, specific will

Acts 9:7 Stood speechless: dumb (as making signs); *hearing a voice, but seeing no man.* Observed fireworks and heard thunder but didn't understand a thing. 1 Ki 19:13-15; Acts 22:9

Why couldn't they understand? Because Jesus wasn't speaking to them. He was speaking to Saul.

Acts 9:8 Phillips: *They gazed all about them and saw nothing. Saul was blinded and saw everything. ... Saul, though physically blinded, had his inner eyes opened to the light.*

Acts 9:9 God immobilized him! James 4:6 1 Pet 5:6 1 Pet 5:7

Mac: *During his three days ... God led him through the process of reconstructing everything he was and did. Although salvation is an instantaneous transformation from death to life, darkness to light, it takes time to plumb the depths of its meaning and richness. Saul began that process.*

Wiersbe: *the angry bull (Acts 9:1) had now become a docile lamb!*

About Saul: Zealot Jew, radical Pharisee, religious person; On a mission to eliminate Christians; Motive: Please God. Stand for the Word; Sincere; God sought him out; He repented of unbelief and turned to Christ; God humbled him; Needed time to think and reflect

SO WHAT?

- Just because you are religious doesn't mean you're saved.
- Just because you are on a mission doesn't mean you are saved
- Motive might be right but if doctrine wrong you could end up in Hell
- God will seek you out.
- God humbles the one He chooses to use
- When He does, utilize the time for reflection